

**SUMMARY OF THE
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 11, 2002**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on April 11, 2002, at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was lead by Chair Ms. Silky Labie of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The draft agenda for this meeting is shown in Attachment A, action items from the last meeting are shown in Attachment B, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment C and a list of participants is shown in Attachment D. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance as identified in the agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

Jeanne Hankins called the meeting to order and Ann Marie Allen took attendance

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from January 10 and February 14, 2002, are still under further review with changes to be made by e-mail within the Board. They will be re-examined at the next teleconference for final approval. The minutes from the March 14, 2002 teleconference were approved as amended.

Assessor Forum

David Friedman reported that the On-Site Assessment Committee had been looking at ways to build consistency across the accreditation and assessor community, providing them with ongoing training, and addressing issues. The committee has proposed that the most efficient means to meet these goals would be to have a periodic electronic meeting, via phone and internet. Mr. Friedman indicated that an electronic forum would be able to handle 100-200 people, and would last between 1-4 hours. As part of the ongoing training, it would be required that every assessor participate in one of these electronic forums once every year. It is also planned that one electronic forum would also be held in conjunction with a large capacity meeting. These electronic forums are proposed to begin October 2002.

The goals set forth for the electronic forums are to:

- Promote consistency of laboratory assessments
- Encourage information sharing among assessors
- Provide feedback to committees regarding the NELAC Standards.

These forums would be open to NELAC assessors, members of the On-Site Assessment Committee, and others invited by the chair of the forum. Costs of participating would be borne by the participant and although the actual cost is not yet known, it is expected to be minimal. Tom Maloney indicated that USGS has “cyber seminars” and offered to collaborate with Mr. Friedman on these forums.

Although actual content and format of these forums have not yet been determined, some possibilities are:

- Pre-identified topics
- Round table format
- Case studies
- Critique of an On-Site report
- A quiz at the end of the forum

The Board was supportive and believed this was a viable pursuit. The committee will continue developing these forums.

Methods Data Comparability Board

Mr. Friedman reported that the National Water Quality Monitoring Council met on April 3, 2002, during which Herb Brass (EPA, Office of Water) and Jerry Parr (Catalyst LLC) presented a recommendation to the attendees that they support the accreditation of federal laboratories. This recommendation was unanimously approved, specifically citing NELAC accreditation as the preferred option. Mr. Friedman will obtain the exact wording of the motion that was made and approved and will forward this to Ms. Hankins.

Transition Committee Update

Ken Jackson reported that the Transition and Program Policy and Structure Committees held a joint teleconference April 10, 2002, during which a final review was given to the modified Constitution and Bylaws. Plans on how both committees will jointly present the Constitution and Bylaws at NELAC 8 were discussed. Drs. Kimsey and Jackson will develop an outline of the presentation. This outline will be the starting point for discussion at the next Transition and Program Policy and Structure Committees teleconference.

Constitution & Bylaws

Dr. Jackson presented the amended Constitution and Bylaws as developed by the Program Policy and Structure Committee and sanctioned by the Transition Committee. Under the proposed restructuring, the standards will be developed by existing or new consensus standards organizations. NELAC will continue to exist to enable the states to adopt the standards and uniformly implement them. Dr. Jackson pointed out that a point of controversy found throughout the document is the specification of a minimum number of officials of NELAP Accrediting Authorities to serve on the Board and various committees. This issue was a topic of discussion at the last joint teleconference of the Transition and Program Policy and Structure Committees, with no consensus reached. It will be discussed further at their next teleconference. The Transition and Program Policy and Structure Committees propose that this document be posted on the website and sent out to participants as early as possible for their review and vote at NELAC 8. A portion of the timeframe allotted to the joint Transition and Program Policy and Structure Committees meeting at NELAC 8 will be given to entertaining comments and making any last minute changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. Ms. Hankins recommended that all members peruse the

document closely and send any comments to Dr. Jackson, prior to its May 15th website posting date.

NELAP AAs Recommendation

Encouraging Small Laboratory Participation - Dr. Jackson presented the request made by the NELAP Accrediting Authorities (AAs) that the Board of Directors considers the problems of limited participation in NELAP by small laboratories. Dr. Jackson stated that many small laboratories have not been willing or are unable to either support the NELAC concept or to seek NELAP accreditation. The solution may be two-fold: further outreach to the small laboratory community may evince a need to make further modifications to the NELAC Standards to address the needs of small laboratories; and encouragement of small laboratories may be needed to elicit input and increase participation as well as will educate them about NELAC/NELAP.

The NELAP AAs are requesting that the Membership and Outreach Committee suggest methods to improve communication and participation by small laboratories. The Board also requested that an *ad hoc*, committee be formed to review the Standards, line by line, to see if other ways of addressing the needs of small laboratories can be found, while maintaining an identical level of quality. After some discussion on whether a subcommittee be formed to resolve this issue, Dr. Jackson recommended that the Board of Directors form an *ad hoc* committee, with one representative from each standing committee appointed to review that committee's particular standards. Ms. Anne Rhyne recommended forming a "Small Laboratories Committee", which would formally address these issues. Based on the Board's recommendation, Ms. Labie will form a "Small Laboratories Committee", having them first review what has been done in the past, then identify what areas need to be researched for the future, in order to generate some recommendations.

ECOS Update

Ms. Hankins introduced and welcomed Ms. Sherry Clay as the new chair for the Membership and Outreach Committee. Ms. Clay reported on the poster that the Membership and Outreach Committee developed for the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) Conference, April 23 - 25, 2002. Ed Kantor will ship the poster directly to Alfredo Sotomayor, who will set the poster up at the conference. Ms. Carol Batterton will be there to make a presentation. Two fact sheets, as handouts for the approximately 150 expected attendees, will be provided. Ms. Labie will send NELAC 8 announcements to Mr. Sotomayor, for distribution at ECOS.

Ms. Clay stated that the next project the Membership and Outreach Committee plans to work on is a poster intended for small laboratories.

PT Request for EPA Action

Ms. Barbara Burmeister reported that in October the Board of Directors had sent a letter to Messrs Longest and Hanlon, asking the status of the EPA Proficiency Testing Database. The Proficiency Testing Committee made a proposal to assume responsibility or work with EPA to revise the criteria document that is used to accredit proficiency testing (PT) providers. At the Interim

meeting, a letter was received from Messrs Longest and Hanlon, stating that the PT database would be discontinued. As far as the criteria document was concerned, EPA stated that it had not yet been determined how to best address NELAC's offer to coordinate the process and would respond once the issue was resolved. In the meantime, NELAC has developed method and analyte codes that need to be incorporated into the criteria document as the PT providers use these codes. The Proficiency Testing Committee requested that the Board of Directors request an update of the status of the criteria document. The Board suggested that Ms Burmeister contact Mr. Friedman to follow up on the issue. If NELAC were to modify the criteria document, NIST cooperation would be essential for success. Ms. Burmeister stated that the goal of the PT Committee is to have a criteria document that includes all NELAC requirements for the PT providers. She will take this issue back to the PT Committee for further discussion.

American Association of Bioanalysts

Wayne Davis reported that the American Association of Bioanalysts is planning to hold a conference at the end of April, at which a private laboratory consultant by the name of Ken Jensen will give a presentation on NELAP. Mr. Davis will attend all or part of this conference in order to provide information, should it be needed.

NELAC 8

Ms. Labie reported that the NELAC 8 brochure is due back from the printer and will be mailed out shortly. Ms. Dawn Jenkins of the University of Florida, who is coordinating the meeting logistics, will update the registration information found on the website to reflect the information found in the official brochure. Ms. Labie asked to be kept apprised of any problems with registering online, so that those problems can be quickly resolved. It was noted that there were two minor errors: the NIST meeting is Monday (not Tuesday) July 8th and ELAB Open Forum is Tuesday (not Wednesday) July 9th. Note also that later corrections to the agenda include a session of the Accrediting Authority Review Board on Thursday morning July 11th.

NELAC 8i

Ms. Hankins announced that NELAC 8i will be co-hosted by the State of New Mexico, a non-NELAP state. Ms. Barbara Giesler reported that she is working on securing a contract with the Hotel La Fonda, in Santa Fe for the week of November 18, 2002. Ms. Giesler will share more information with the Board of Directors as it becomes available.

Policies

This item will be deferred for discussion at the next teleconference.

Linda Fisher Briefing

Ms. Hankins reported that Ms. Barbara Finazzo, Region 2, has been invited to make a presentation to Linda Fisher, possibly in May. She will focus on the advantages of NELAC for the Agency. During a meeting with the Board of Directors and ELAB members, Ms. Fisher had

indicated she would be open to another briefing once a strategic plan was developed for NELAC that addressed the funding issue.

Strategic Planning

This item will was deferred for discussion at the next teleconference. Ms. Labie did note that one of the questions to be addressed will be the status of the report from the strategic planning meeting held prior to NELAC 7i. Ms Hankins reported that Steve Billets is responsible for that product and it should be ready within a few weeks. Ms. Labie indicated that at the time of receipt, a face-to-face strategy meeting might be in order.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEXT TELECONFERENCE

The next teleconference for the Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, May 09, 2002, at 1:30 p.m., EDT.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned

**NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DRAFT AGENDA
April 11, 2002
1:30 - 3:00 PM EDT**

1. Approval of Minutes of March 14, 2002, Meeting - *Silky Labie*
2. Assessor Forum by Teleconference - *David Friedman*
3. Methods Data Comparability Board – *David Friedman*
4. Transition Committee Update - *Paul Kimsey*
5. Constitution & Bylaws - *Ken Jackson*
6. NELAP AAs Recommendation† - *Ken Jackson*
 - Encouraging small laboratory participation
7. ECOS Update - *Ed Kantor*
8. PT Request for EPA Action - *Barb Burmeister*
9. American Association of Bioanalysts - *Wayne Davis*
10. NELAC 8 - *Silky Labie*
11. NELAC 8i - *Barbara Giesler*
12. Policies - *Jeanne Hankins*
13. Linda Fisher Briefing - *Jeanne*
14. Strategic Planning - *Silky Labie*
15. Old Business
16. New Business

**NEW ACTION ITEMS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS/CHAIRS
APRIL 11, 2002**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	Mr. Friedman will obtain the exact wording of the motion that was made and approved by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council on April 3, 2002, and forward this to Ms. Hankins.	ASAP
2	Drs. Kimsey and Jackson will develop an outline of the presentation for NELAC 8.	04/24/02
3	Members are to peruse the Constitution and Bylaws closely and send any comments to Dr. Jackson.	05/15/02
4	Ms. Labie to form a "Small Laboratories Committee."	ASAP
5	Ms. Labie to send NELAC 8 announcements to Mr. Sotomayor, for distribution at ECOS.	ASAP
6	Ms. Burmeister will take the criteria document issue back to the PT Committee for further discussion.	ASAP

**ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APRIL 11, 2002**

No.	DATE OF MEETING	ACTION	STATUS
1.	03/14/02	Make changes to January 10 and February 14, 2002 minutes and deliver to Ms. Labie/Ms. Hankins (Anteon)	Complete
2.	03/14/02	Review January 10 and February 14, 2002 minutes for approval (Board)	04/11/02
3.	03/14/02	Attend Membership & Outreach teleconference to discuss registration process and NELAC poster content to be presented at ECOS Meeting (Ms. Shields)	Complete
4.	03/14/02	Add language to NELAC poster regarding proficiency testing and field testing (Mr. Kantor)	Complete
5	03/14/02	Ask Dr. Hammerschmidt to review NELAC poster for comments or suggestions (Ms. Shields)	Complete
6	03/14/02	Forward updated NELAC 8 brochure to Ms. Labie (Ms. Hankins)	Complete
7	03/14/02	Investigate how to handle certificates for multiple primary accrediting authorities for non-NELAC states (Ms. Hankins)	Ongoing
8	03/14/02	Formal response to AIHA letter (Ms. Labie)	Ongoing
9	05/04/00	The Membership and Outreach committee will draft a policy addressing the logistics of web-submitted issues: routing, response, etc.	Ongoing
42	02/08/01	Mr. Ed Kantor will follow-up with Membership and Outreach committee on Item No. 6 (05/04/2000).	Ongoing
68	12/04/01	Add Field Activities field sampling issue to the Quality Staff Conference (Siegelman); Ms. Hankins to check status with Dr. Siegelman	Complete
69	12/04/01	Comments/suggested changes to NELAC Policies 1-18 to BoD by 12/13/01 (BoD/Chairs); deferred to 2/14/02	Complete

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 11, 2002**

Name	Affiliation	Address
Ms. Silky Labie Chair	FL Dept. of Envir. Protection	T: 850-488-2796 F: 850-922-4614 E: silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us
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Dr. Paul Kimsey Chair-Elect	CA Department of Health Services	T: 510-307-8419 F: 510-412-5848 E: pkimsey@dhs.ca.gov
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Ms. Aurora Shields	KS Dept. of Health & Env.	T: 785-296-6198 F: 785-296-8068 E: ashields@kdhe.state.ks.us
Mr. Joe Slayton (Absent)	USEPA/Region 3	T: 410-305-2653 F: 410-305-3095 E: slayton.joe@epamail.epa.gov
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Ms. Sherry Clay, Chair Membership & Outreach (Invited Guest)	Texas Dept. of Health	T: (512) 458-7381 F: (512) 458-7294 E: sherry.clay@tdh.state.tx.us
Mr. David Friedman (Invited Guest)	USEPA	T: (202) 564-6662 F: (202) 565-2432 E: friedman.david@epa.gov
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Ms. Aggie Henning (Invited Guest)	EPA	T: (702) 798-2472 F: (702) 798-2261 E: henning.aggie@epa.gov
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